



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Triangle Hospitals to Become Completely Tobacco-Free in July 2007**

**Triangle Area, N.C. (October 3, 2006)** – North Carolina's three major Triangle area health systems, including Duke University Health System, UNC Health Care and WakeMed Health & Hospitals, announced their decision today to become 100 percent tobacco-free by July 4, 2007. Combined, these three health systems have nearly 3,000,000 patient encounters per year, serving patients from all 100 counties in North Carolina. Together, the three systems employ nearly 40,000 health care workers.

While the hospitals have banned the use of tobacco products inside their buildings for several years, the new policies will prohibit the use of tobacco products anywhere on hospital property for employees, physicians, patients, visitors and any person on the properties. Hospitals included in these systems include Duke University Hospital, Duke Health Raleigh Hospital, Durham Regional Hospital, Rex Healthcare, UNC Hospitals, WakeMed Raleigh Campus, WakeMed Cary Hospital, and WakeMed North Healthplex. Outlying and ancillary facilities included in these health systems will also operate as completely tobacco-free.

Duke Medicine, UNC Health Care, and WakeMed Health & Hospitals join more than 35 percent of hospitals in North Carolina, and a growing number of health care facilities across the nation that have already made the decision to go tobacco-free. This decision supports the mission of the Triangle area hospitals to promote health and wellness in the community.

A recent report by the U.S. Surgeon General documents the serious and deadly health effects of involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. Secondhand smoke is a major cause of disease, including lung cancer and coronary heart disease, in healthy, nonsmokers. Today, massive and conclusive scientific evidence documents adverse effects of involuntary smoking on children and adults, including cancer and cardiovascular diseases in adults, and adverse respiratory effects in both children and adults. This policy is intended to eliminate the potential for exposure to second hand smoke and smokeless tobacco products on triangle hospital campuses.

Dr. Victor J. Dzau, a cardiologist and Chancellor for Health Affairs at Duke University and President and CEO of the Duke University Health System said: “This is an important decision that directly improves health and that protects our patients, our visitors, and our employees. We will also provide support to those who want to quit smoking by offering cessation courses and by making nicotine replacement therapy available to those who need it.”

“At a time when the surgeon general has reported that all Americans’ health is at risk from second-hand smoke, we, along with our affiliate Rex Healthcare and neighboring health care institutions, feel compelled to take immediate steps to eliminate risks to patients, visitors and employees,” said Dr. William L. Roper, CEO of the UNC Health Care System. “During this period of transition, we will develop multiple layers of support for our patients and employees to help them quit smoking.”

“As health care providers and leaders in our field, we must lead by example,” explains Dr. Bill Atkinson, president & CEO, WakeMed Health & Hospitals. “The community looks to us for medical advice, expertise and outstanding health care services. Taking this important step to provide a healthier environment for our patients, employees, physicians and visitors, is the right thing to do, and supports our commitment to improving the quality of health care delivered in North Carolina.”

Persons wishing to quit will be provided with resources available through *Quit Now NC!* such as their tobacco use quit line 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). Each facility will also issue a series of protocols for staff to follow when a patient or visitor requests smoking cessation assistance.

###

### **About Duke University Health System**

Duke University Health System is a world-class network dedicated to employing Duke's strengths in patient care, education, and research to enhance and improve health care throughout North Carolina and southern Virginia. Founded in 1998 to provide efficient, responsive care while responding to the changing health care environment, this partnership between Duke and several other high-quality health care organizations provides quality health services across the entire continuum of care, from wellness to hospice.

### **About UNC Health Care**

The UNC Health Care System is a not-for-profit integrated health care system owned by the state of North Carolina and based in Chapel Hill. It exists to further the teaching mission of the University of North Carolina and to provide state-of-the-art patient care. UNC Health Care is comprised of UNC Hospitals, ranked consistently among the best medical centers in the country; the UNC School of Medicine, a nationally eminent research institution; community practices; home health and hospice services in seven

central North Carolina counties; and Rex Healthcare and its provider network in Wake County. For more information, visit [www.unchealthcare.org](http://www.unchealthcare.org).

Rex Healthcare is a private, not-for-profit healthcare system, with 4,000 employees. Its main Rex Hospital campus in west Raleigh is a 665-bed facility (433 general acute beds, 6 inpatient hospice and 226 skilled nursing) treating more than 26,000 inpatients each year. Rex offers dedicated centers for family birth, cancer, post acute rehabilitation and skilled nursing care, heart and vascular, same-day surgery and wellness, plus dedicated clinics for pain management, sleep disorders, diabetes education and state-of-the-art emergency services. Rex provides various healthcare services throughout Wake County with facilities in Cary, Apex, Garner, Wakefield and downtown Raleigh. Rex received the Distinguished Hospital Award for both Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety™ by HealthGrades, an independent national healthcare research organization. Rex is also the first hospital in the Triangle, and one of only 10 in North Carolina to receive Magnet Recognition, which places Rex nurses among the top two percent in the country.

### **About WakeMed Health & Hospitals**

WakeMed Health & Hospitals, one of the first hospital systems in the country, is a private, not-for-profit health care organization based in Raleigh, N.C. The 851-bed system comprises a network of health care facilities throughout Wake and Johnston Counties, including: a Level I Trauma Center and tertiary referral hospital and rehabilitation hospital in Raleigh, a community hospital in Cary, a comprehensive outpatient center and freestanding emergency department in North Raleigh, seven outpatient rehabilitation sites, two skilled-nursing and outpatient facilities, a 100+-physician multispecialty practice, and home health services. The system includes two accredited Chest Pain Centers and one JCAHO-certified Stroke Center. Throughout the system, there are an additional 118 beds under construction. WakeMed also provides management services for Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital in Dunn, NC. Centers of excellence include cardiac and vascular care, women's and children's services, physical rehab, emergency and trauma, orthopaedics, neurosciences, home care and numerous wellness and community outreach programs. WakeMed's team of 7,000 nurses, technologists and medical support staff and more than 1,000 affiliated physicians serve the residents of North Carolina using the most advanced technologies and facilities to ensure the finest in health care. For more information, visit [www.wakemed.org](http://www.wakemed.org).

###

### **Media Contacts:**

#### **Duke University Health System**

Carla Hollis  
(919) 954-3100  
[holli014@rch.duhs.duke.edu](mailto:holli014@rch.duhs.duke.edu)

#### **UNC Health Care**

Lynn Wooten  
(919) 966-6046  
[LWooten@unch.unc.edu](mailto:LWooten@unch.unc.edu)

#### **Rex Healthcare**

Melody Hunter-Pillion  
(919) 784-4467  
[Melody.Hunter-Pillion@rexhealth.com](mailto:Melody.Hunter-Pillion@rexhealth.com)

#### **WakeMed Health & Hospitals**

Heather Monackey  
(919) 350-7975  
[hmonackey@wakemed.org](mailto:hmonackey@wakemed.org)